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ABSTRACT

In essential-schools philosophy, the purpose of education on the individual level is to instill intellectual and moral discipline. On a societal level, education's purpose is to transmit the essential portion of total heritage to students. Technocratic rationality is the belief that bureaucrats and administrators decide policy about the goals of education, while teachers determine how to achieve those goals. The combination of essential-schools philosophy and technocratic rationality has made teachers and students feel subservient to those above them. There is a growing conflict in education between functionalist and neo-Marxist constructs. This conflict can be seen in disagreements over gay and lesbian literature in schools, sex education, birth control, and religion and school entanglements. Technocratic rationality was established in public education in the 1890s when it was determined the purpose of education was to create a moral, independently thinking, working individual. At the same time, John Dewey was developing his theories that promoted methods of science in education. However, Dewey's scientific principles were misapplied and teachers and students became objects to control and manage. A significant dialectical tension continues between traditionalists and the more liberal empirical-naturalistic, pragmatic, student-centered claims. Reference notes are included. (JPT)

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ESSENTIAL SCHOOLS AND THE BASICS: RESISTING TECHNOCRATIC RATIONALITY

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ESSENTIAL SCHOOLS AND THE BASICS: RESISTING TECHNOCRATIC RATIONALITY

Norman J. Bauer

Saturday, March 6, 1993

Introduction

Let me start by clarifying two terms, 'essential' and 'technocratic rationality'. By essential I am not referring to the term which may have been used first by Michael Demiashkevich in 1935.[1] Shortly after, in a 1938 article that presented a platform for a conservative reform movement in education, William Bagely used this term to name the conservative tradition in education.[2] In this article Bagley identified what he called the 'Essentialist Platform' as the grounds for the improvement of education in America. The principles of essentialism that emerged from that platform and which have dominated the conservative tradition in education ever since claimed that, from the point of view of the individual, the purpose of education is intellectual and moral discipline; from the standpoint of society it is to transmit the essential portion of the total heritage to those who come to school. The curriculum would be a rationally ordered series of subject matters, of skills, of values. Teaching would be the art of transmitting in an effective and an efficient way . And the role of the school would be that of preserving and transmitting the essential core of our culture.[3]

Not insignificantly, in terms of this paper, their platform appeared during the sixth year of the Eight Year Study. [4] As I shall point out later, the theory behind the 'essential schools' to which this paper alludes has much in common with the theory which the schools that participated in this study were testing.

By 'technocratic rationality' I am referring to the belief about public schools in our culture, a belief which seems to have emerged more by historical accident than by conscious design, which argues that bureaucrats in state-level offices, as well as administrators of local school districts, are the appropriate parties to be involved in policy-making relative to the ends which schools are to pursue; while the teachers in the classrooms are the ones responsible for determining the means to achieve these ends. A dualistic, factory-oriented frame of reference, largely governed by the principles which have dominated conservative, essentialist thinking since Demiaskevich and Bagley, principles which claim that one of the most important tasks of schools is to socialize, to mold the young to fit into and accept existing social practices and requirements,[5] has increasinly hegemonized most of our thinking about what schools should be doing.

As a result, new teachers are inducted into a occupation (at best a psuedo-profession) in which their preparation, particularly their field experiences, has led them to accept their position as a worker who is responsible to bosses; and students are led to perceive their function as learners to be that of consumers who, in conjunction with the teacher-workers, maintain the 'boss' class.

Basic Assumption

Despite the likelihood that this hegemonizing influence would make It impossible for us to arrive at consensus about whether there is any one concept which could be employed to describe the cultural context within which public schooling in America is situated at the present time. I am going to commence with the assumption that there is such a term, and that term is 'dialectic.'

This assumption claims that we are witnessing today as never before in the history of public schooling a growing resistance between what some have described as the 'functionalist' (the traditionalist, the essentialist) and 'neo-Marxist' constructions of reality. [6]

Consider the following: The glaring example of homophobic thinking which has emerged around the policies of the Chancellor of the public schools in New York City relative to his proposal to include gay-lesbian literature as a portion of the reading program for students in grades one and two. Clearly the outpouring of opposition to this proposal from significant members of the Board of Education in that city reveals a deep-seated homophobic orientation, almost total lack of understanding about this population, and a strong desire to retain the status quo in the schools. The dismissal of Chancellor Fernandez as a result reveals the plight confronting anyone who would make an effort to confront this homophobic opposition, and other matters related to sexuality, in any intelligent, farsighted fashion.

Or the dialectic which has emerged in New York State as a result of the decision by our highest state court [7] to support a recommendation by Commissioner Sobol that, when school districts establish district committees to participate in the construction of any policy regarding sex

education in our schools, they are to include representatives from religious faiths. Putting aside the fact that this decision clearly integrates the activity of church and state in a way which is bound to lead to 'excessive entanglement',[8] clearly the question must be raised about how likely it is that any but mainstream religions will be selected for representation.

The immediate opposition voiced by the Vatican to the decision by the Clinton Administration to rescind the 'gag' rule, a throwback to the dark ages, of the Bush Administration regarding the right of medical personnel working in or for family planning clinics, including those based in our schools, to apprise their clients of their options relative to abortion. And, the opposition schools have confronted from those who would make available birth control technologies to young people, such as the current use of Norplant in the Baltimore public schools

Opposition which is immediately voiced by functionalists when significant industries are attacked because of their pollution of the environment.

Tensions which immediately erupt when one challenges policy makers about their allocation of public tax dollars to fund nonpublic sectarian and nonsectarian institutions.

The almost total denial of the existence of Home Schooling and the values which can be derived from such educational efforts by young people.

The almost total absence of any substantive knowledge to be derived by prospective teachers and administrators from study in the domain of the social foundations of education. The failure to recognize

the significance and usefulness of foundational knowledge is revealed by the content currently included in the National Teacher Examination. Of more potential significance is the glaring absence of Foundational knowledge in the tests currently being prepared and about to be administered for the first time in New York State by the National Evaluation Systems Corporation in Massachusettes.

Or the dialectic which has emerged in our state as a consequence of the recent publication by the Regents of a statement referring to the private colleges in our state as the growth industry of the 90's in New York Higher Education, and the subsequent establishment of a blue-ribbon panel to construct recommendations along the lines of such a view of higher education in our state.

Closer to home, on most of our campuses, the almost total denial by the larger campus of the expertise, to say nothing of the actual presence, of professors laboring in the field of education. This is a condition which has been exacerbated by the failure of foundations professors to engage their colleagues in the dialogue necessary to bring about an understanding of the need for such conceptual awareness and understanding.

The dialectic created when students refuse to rise to recite the pledge, when public school officials permit religious groups to employ their facilities to purvey their various doctrines, when public schools request clerics to say prayers during graduation ceremonies, when students and faculty alike see no problem with moments of silence, or even with prayer readings during the school day.

Clearly we are living in an age during which dialectical activity has begun to encompass pedagogical activity at every turn. When the technical

rationality, or what some have called the 'bureautechnocracy' [9] of the state enters in and establishes policies regarding the 'proper' positions to be pursued, the 'correct' curriculum to follow, within these opposing views, the need for teachers to be educated in a way which induces them to acquire habits of resistance [10] which will enable them to become critical rather than functional pedagogues becomes vitally important.

Marcuse stresses the importance of dialectic in a most insightful when he says that "Since the established universe of discourse is that of an unfree world, dialectical thought is necessarily destructive, and whatever libration it may bring is liberation in thought, in theory. However, the divorce of thought from action, of theory from practice, is itself part of an unfree world. No thought and no theory can undo it; but theory may help to prepare the ground for their possible reunion, and the ability of thought to develop a logic and language of contradiction is a prerequisite for this task."[11]

Technocratic Rationality

Let us examine the historical emergence of 'technocratic rationality'. This way of thinking about schooling has emerged irresistibly and almost imperceptively ever since the critical views about schools were voiced by Joseph Mayer Rice during the final half of 1890's. In 1896 he argued that "educators themselves cannot come to an agreement in regard to what changes, if any, are desirable or feasible. . . a careful consideration of educational discussion, however, shows that a difference of opinion on the general purpose of our schools does not exist; but that there is substantially an agreement to the effect that the general aim of the elementary schools in our country is to develop a moral

individual, endowed with the power of independent thought, the ability to earn an honest livelihood, culture, refinement, and a broad and intelligent interest in human affairs." [12] He argued further that "in matters pertaining to the practical conduct of the schools, our notions today are not much more definite than they might have been a century ago. . ."[13]

At the same time Dewey was developing a 'New Education' within his Laboratory School at Chicago, a theory of education designed to extract the implications for the education of children of Darwin's theory of evolution. One important feature of this New Education was the stress Dewey would place on having the children acquire the habits of mind associated with the method of science.. The significance of his effort to have each student engage in practical experience which was desinged to enable them to acquire these habits was not easily perceived by those who considered the experimental nature of his curriculum. This was to prove exceptionally irksome to Dewey in subsequent decades.

While this was going on psychology was making its break from philosophy as more and more psychologists perceived what they thought was the potential of the method of science, of a positivist rationality, to bring discipline and respectability to their discipline. Efforts to measure overt, quantifiable changes in behavior, initially in animals, quickly followed in humans, captured the minds of most learning theorists during the first two decades of this century.

Giroux claims that this rationality became the dominant theoretical underpinning, not only of educational theory and research, but also of such cognate disciplines as sociology and psychology. "American educational theory and research," he argued, "became firmly entrenched within an

instrumentalist tradition that defined progress as technological growth and learning as the mastery of skills and solving of practical problems." [14]

Juxtaposed with this development in educational theory and its related cognate fields, was the emergence of an instrumental model of of scientific management which had been created by Frederick Taylor.[15] Drawing on three examples, one a bricklaying experiment, a second, work done at a ball-bearing plant in Fitchburg, Massachusettes, the third, from work done at Bethlehem Steel, Taylor's theory included 1. time and motion study as well as the study, anlaysis and improvement of tools and machines; 2. the introduction of standardization; 3. the importance of management setting definite tasks each day for each worker, tasks with specific instructions accompanied by a bonus plan; 4. the importance of a 'functional foreman' who would oversee the work of the workers, teaching them new methods when appropriate; and 5. the establishment of a planning department which would be responsible for establishing goals, engaging in job analysis and implementing the theory in practice. [16]

School people quickly perceived a relationship between the positivistic theories of behaviorism which were emerging from Watson, Thorndike and others and the management science theory of Taylor. Such plans as the Dalton, Gary, and Pueblo, designed to pursue the goal of efficiency in the use of school buildings as well as in the efficiency of teaching, quickly emerged under the leadership of school people whose efforts were perceived by themselves as well as by others as being very progressive. Individualized learning, specific units of instruction with immediative evaluation, became the vogue; all under the guise of

educational theory which was grounded in a scientific methodology. Clearly, in the minds of many, even today, this constituted a correct translation of the ideas of Dewey and his slim coterie of knowledgeable devotees.

However, this was quite incorrect. Few school people, particularly administrators and policy-makers who moved quickly to apply scientific principles to the management of their schools, understood what Dewey perceived to be the significant implications for schooling of evolutionary theory; and practically none of them perceived the significance of his 'functional' theory of learning. Indeed, empirical and postivitivistic power of the behaviorist view simply suppressed any likelihood that Dewey's functional theory would survive as a viable way of perceiving human learning.

This became increasingly inevitable because of the particularly strong efforts of capitalist interests during the first three decades of this century, efforts which have continued unabated since, to dominate the purposes and outcomes of public schooling . These were decades during which the 'factory' concept of schooling, with its hierarchical bureaucracy, with its CEO mentality, with its stress on large physical plants, with its stress on predetermined ends and management science technologies, with its cost-effectiveness mentality, became the norm for public schools throughout the land. Stress was placed almost entirely on the reproductive teaching of those subjects which would emphasize and enhance the importance of vocational ends, which would socialize the students for the world of work by disciplining them in terms of the work ethic which was related to the vocational ends. As Aronowitz and Bologh point out in their introduction to Giroux's work, such reproduction

theories "posit a rigid socialization model geared to the labor market. . . ."[17]

Clearly, the reverence for the child and the child's interests and the method of thinking which inspired and drove the Deweyan frame of reference was not recognized because of the immediate effort of those in positions of power to apply the method of science to schooling by creating the vast number of structural changes which were imposed on schools throughout these years.

This continued to be the case throughout the second decade of this century. It was registered most forcefully by the 1918 NEA sponsored report of the Commssion on the Reorganization of Secondary Education, in which the Seven Cardinal Principles of education made their first appearance. Established in 1913, the Commission agreed that the responsibility of the school was to be broadened to encompass a far broader range of purposes than had been pursued before. The major argument for this enlarged set of objectives was that the school was to teach the whole child. This was translated to mean that authorities were to become increasingly responsible for generating aims which would considerably broaden the scope of the curriculum. Clearly, the school would take on more of a factory atmosphere as teachers were implored to pursue goals which were administered to them.

Curriculum specialists like Charters and Bobbitt quickly took up the behaviorist cudgel, employing empirical, scientific methodologies as they engaged in task analyses for the specific purpose of designing curricula which would relate to the tasks students would be likely to confront after their formal schooling. Curriculum development would, from their perspective, increasingly become a science. Just as the management of

industry was to be governed by scientific principles, so too, the schools would be managed by the method of science.

Clearly, Dewey's stress on the importance of acquiring the habits associated the method of science had been misconstrued by well-intentioned school people. Educational endeavors were to be organized and implemented in a scientific manner, with the students, and largely the teachers as well, perceived as objects which would be systematically controlled and managed by external authorities. This was, of course, most certainly not the way in which the functional thinking of Dewey perceived the method of science entering into the minds of teachers and students as they collaborated with one another in the school environment.

Despite this strong effort to bring about scientifically implemented schools, there remained a small coterie of school people devoted to the interests of the student who managed, somehow, to resist this hegemonizing frame of reference. They continued to believe that any improvement in the quality of learning which would emerge from the schools would have to emerge from a truly radical change in the way in which which students were perceived. The dialectic between the dominant traditionalists and the oppressed progressives, or what I have called elsewhere, between the advocates of Discipline-Centered Schooling (DCS) and Empirical-Naturalistic Schooling (ENS), was now to emerge in full bloom.[18]

The intellectual persuasions of some of these empirical, naturalistically orientated educators emerged clearly during the 1930's when the Eight-Year Study was conducted by The Commission on the Relation of School and College of The Progressive Education Association,

with financial support from the Carnegie Corporation of New York and the General Education Board. The Commission had two major purposes in mind: "I. To establish a relationship between school and college that would permit and encourage reconstruction in the secondary school. 2. To find, through exploration and experimentation, how the high school in the United States can serve youth more effectively."[19]

Two major principles were to guide this study. "*The first was that the general life of the school and methods of teaching should conform to what is now known about the ways in which human beings learn and grow . . . . The second major principle which guided the work of the participating schools was that the high school in the United States should re-discover its chief reason for existence..*" [20] (Italics in the original).

The framers of these principles argued that learning theory had been construed to be "an intellectual process of acquiring certain skills and of mastering prescribed subject matter. . . physical and emotional reactions are not involved in the learning process, but if they are, they are not very important. The newer concept of learning," they asserted, "holds that a human being develops through doing those things which have meaning to him; that the doing involves the whole person in all aspects of his being; and that growth takes place as each experience leads to greater understanding and more intelligent reaction to new situations. . . . [They] believed that the school should become a place in which young people work together at tasks which are clearly related to their purposes. . . school . . . should be a place to which one goes gladly because there he can engage in activities which satisfy his desires, work at the solution of problems which he faces in everyday living, and have opened to him new interests

and wider horizons."[21]

Further, they argued that "the primary purpose of education is to lead our young people to understand, to appreciate, and to live the kind of life for which we as a people have been striving throughout our history. . . . Other things are important but only relatively so. It is necessaary to teach the three "R's," science, language, history, mathematics, the arts, safety, vocations, and most of the other subjects that now crowd the curriculums of the schools; but unless our young people catch the vision which has led us on through all generations, we perish. . . the school itself should become a demonstration of the kind of life in which this nation believes. . . . the most important service the school can render youth is to give them understanding and appreciation of the way of life we call democracy, and that the best way to understand and appreciate it is to live that kind of life at school every day." [22]

What were some of the outcomes of this study? "First, the assumption that preparation for the liberal arts college depends upon the study of certain prescribed subjects in the secondary school is no longer tenable. . . . the assumption upon which school and college relations have been based in the past must be abandoned. . . .[23]

Second, "secondary schools can be trusted with a greater measure of freedom than college requirements now permit.[24]

The study revealed further that custom and tradition control the patterns of thinking and acting among teachers and students to such an extent that it is not easy for teachers to create new ones very easily. Usually, those involved in the study observed, "education is thought of in patterns of school buildings, classrooms, classes, textbooks, courses,

grades, credits, diplomas. It is only when these paraphernalia of education can be pushed into the background of one's mind," they argued, "that realistic thinking becomes possible." [25]

"The purposes of the school," the investigators claimed, "cannot be determined apart from the purposes of the society which maintains the school. The purposes of any society are determined by the life values which the people prize. As a nation we have been striving always for those values which constitute the American way of life . . . We are convinced that the form of social organization called democracy promotes, better than any other, the development of worth and dignity in men and women. It follows, therefore, that *the chief purpose of education in the United States should be to preserve, promote, and refine the way of life in which we as a people believe."* [26] (Italics in the original).

The struggle in which the teachers and students engaged during this study to achieve a clear awareness of this purpose clearly demonstrated the importance of developing in the students excellent habits of co-operative thought and skill in group action.

Further, the study clearly demonstrated that "narrow subject specialization by teachers, which stands in the way of their co-operation with others and blinds them to youth's needs, should disappear from secondary education." [27]

Finally, five conclusions were generated by the study. "First, *every student should achieve competence in the essential skills of communication - reading, writing, oral expression - and in the use of quantitative concepts and symbols.* Second, *inert subject-matter should give way to content that is alive and pertinent to the problems of youth*

and modern civilization. Third, *the common, recurring concerns of American youth should give content and form to the curriculum.* Fourth, *the life and work of the school should contribute, in evry possible way, to the physical, mental and emotional health of every student.* Fifth, *the curriculum in its every part should have one clear, major purpose.* That purpose is to bring to every young American his great heritage of freedom, to develop understanding of the kind of life we seek, and to inspire devotion to human welfare."[28] (Italics in the original).

Grounded in what I referred to earlier as an empirical-naturalistic view of schooling, the Eight-Year Study produced clear and unequivocal evidence about the potential value to be derived from organizing secondary schools on the basis of student interests rather than on the basis of a prior set of goals which have been established by agents extrinsic to the instructional environment.

During the latter years of this study it came under attack first by Demiashkevich, later by Bagley, with the latter's issuance of what has come be known as the Essentialist Platform. Here was a statement which vigorously emphasized the hegemonizing themes of traditional schooling, themes such as basic knowledges and skills, challenging standards, moral development, preparation for citizenship and for vocational pursuits.

The dialectic between the dominant traditional or essentialist image of schooling and that of its adversary, empirical-naturalism, now became clearly etched in the minds of alert students of curriculum theory. The former with its reliance on an idealist-realist rationality, based firmly in external authority; the latter with its pragmatic, experimentalist, critically reflective position, contextually grounded.

Both have been at loggerheads ever since.

During the final years of the 40's Tyler published a brief description of a curriculum course which he taught at the University of Chicago.[29] Quickly assessed and categorized by curriculum theorists, wrongly in my judgment, as an arguement supportive of the Essentialist platform, the model of curriculum development which schoolpeople interpreted from this publication was consistent with that of the behaviorist model of schooling which had been emerging since the early decades of this century.

Since the the publication of Tyler's work, the hegemonizing influence of the essentialis position has been vigorously reinforced and advanced by the works of a number of writers.[30] It has ascended to a position of almost total dominance in terms of curricular theory, exercising such a controlling influence on the minds of school people, many of whom are bereft of any historical awareness, that they are totally unable to imagine or comprehend an alternative way of thinking about educational theory and practice.

During the late 50's, we witnessed the emergence of a stress on Bruners'structure', quickly followed by a decade in which the dominance of the esssentialist paradigm was challenged by the works of Holt, Kozol, and others who, often lacking in an awareness of both Dewey and the Eight Year Study, which had been largely grounded in an empirical-naturalistic ideology, made every effort to return students to the center of the educational process. Bereft of any substantial knowledge about educational theory, assuming they were entering the world of educational change fresh, they did for a brief period have an opening, an enlarging

impact on the thinking of many, school people and lay people alike.

Passage of the federal Education Professions Development Act in 1968, with its latent potential for the later development of performance -based curricula, quickly ended whatever likelihood there was of the humanistic views of the 60's continuing in vogue for long. Once again we were to return to an empirical, positivisitic view of schooling, with goals established by agencies extrinsic to the educative process, with a strong effort to create teacher-proof materials which would become the efficient and effective means for pursuing predetermined purposes. Teachers would be increasingly perceived as technicians, responsible for implementing strategies which would enable students to achieve these goals; along with the proliferation of measurement agents who would regularly determine just how well teachers had achieved the goals.

As the research on school performance came into its own during the decade of the 70's it heightened the intellectual appeal of a research agenda which would examine the effects of school organization to determine if there were clearly better and worse ways for organizing schools for instruction. By the early 1980's, the findings of some of this research, which had become known as "effective schools research", appeared to many to be consistent enough to, as Chubb and Moe point out, "yield a reasonably clear view of the organizational foundations of effective performance. This view," they pointed out, "turned out to be roughly what the more traditional strain of conventional wisdom had suggested it ought to be all along, emphasizing, among other things: clear school goals, rigorous academic standards, order and discipline, homework, strong leadership by the principal, teacher participation in decisionmaking, parental support and cooperation, and high expectations

for student performance."[31]

Since then we have witnessed one reform movement followed by yet another such movement. An avalanche of reports and manifestos on education saturated America between April, 1983 and the end of 1984. The initial movement can be said to have emerged with the publication of several key documents,[32] each of which suggested that America's economic leadership was in jeopardy because the public schools had failed to teach students the basics necessary to maintain our global economic preeminence. Schools would have to be restructured, teachers empowered, the home and the school would have to be more closely aligned with one another, more field-based experience for prospective teachers would be necessary, teachers would be required to acquire more credit hours of preparation in a specialized field, the preparation of teachers in the field of education would be reduced, even eliminated, the liberal arts preparation of teachers would be stressed, more homework, longer school days, longer school years, a greater stress on the use of standardized examinations to measure the quality of learning outcomes, on the establishment of alternative routes to the certification of teachers including the preparation of professionals without any contact with schools of education whatever, and on the development of a National Board of Professional Teaching Standards,[33] responsible for preparing teacher examinations, would be the ways to reform and improve schooling in America.

The second wave of school reform, emerging in the late 80's, has stressed a singular way to improve the outcomes of our schools. This has been by a consistent stress by the federal government on privatization.

Stress has been placed on providing students with an opportunity to choose the school they will attend, with this choice extending to private and parochial schools as well as public.

Careful examination of any of these changes reveals a consistent effort to apply the principles of Taylor to educational reform. We continue to remain in the clutches of functional technocrats who perceive the improvement of teaching and learning to be largely the product of planning by external agencies.

Resisting the Technocrats: The Essential School Movement

Not so with everyone however. Commencing with the 1981-82 academic year Theodore Sizer and a number of associates commenced 'A Study of High Schools',[34] a study of fifteen high schools which was sponsored by the National Association of Secondary School Principals and the Commission on Educational Issues of the National Association of Independent Schools.

Early in his work Sizer stressed the fact that this study "focused on the "triangle"[35] of students, teachers, and the subjects of their study. . . . Any improvement in American high schools," Sizer claimed, "must take into account the stubborn realities of this triangle. Understand the triangle, and the subsequent necessary steps become clear.[36]

As work in the schools progressed a number of key questions about redesigning high schools seemed to emerge. Could a practical, realistic, politically acceptable design be developed which would improve the quality of high school education, which would be guided by some common standards, and at the same time remain respectful of local community traditions? Would schoolpeople be willing to 'buy into' such a design?

The response from some was affirmative. Schoolpeople in a number of institutions revealed an interest in this project. These institutions, together with Brown University, the continuing sponsorship of the National Association of Secondary School Principals, and with the addition of the National Association of Independent Schools, joined together to create the coalition of Essential Schools, out of which the Essential Schools Movement (ESM) has emerged.

Based at Brown University, the Coalition, much as was the case with the Eight Year Study, has no model to sell, no particular program for schools to accept. The initial fundamental belief of Sizer and his colleagues was, and continues to be, that any models or programs, if they were to have integrity and viability, would have to arise independently out of the community contexts in which they were situated. What the Coalition has in common, however, is a set of nine general principles.

"1. *Focus*. The school should focus on helping adolescents learn to use their minds well. Schools should not attempt to be "comprehensive" if such a claim is made at the expense of the school's central intellectual purpose. . . .

"2. *Simple goals*. The school's goals should be simple: that each student master a limited number of centrally important skills and areas of knowledge. . . the program's design should be shaped by the intellectual and imaginative powers and competencies that students need, rather than by "subjects" as conventionally defined. . . Curricular decisions should be guided by the aim of student mastery and achievement rather than by an effort to "cover content."

"3. *Universal goals*. The school's goals should be universal, while the means to these goals will vary as the students themselves vary. . . .

"4. *Personalization.* Teaching and learning should be personalized to the maximum feasible extent. . . toward a goal that no teacher [has] direct responsibilility for more than eighty students. . . .

"5. *Student-as-worker.* The governing practical metaphor of the school should be student-as-worker, rather than the more familiar teacher-as-deliverer-of-instructional-services. . . a prominent pedagogy will be coaching, to provoke students to learn how to learn, and thus to teach themselves.

"6. *Diploma by exhibition.* . . . The diploma should be awarded upon a successful final demonstration of mastery for graduation - an "exhibition." This exhibition by the student of his or her grasp of the central skills and knowledge of the school's program should be jointly administered by the faculty and by higher authorities . . . emphasis is shifted to the students' demonstration that they can do important things.

"7. *Attitude.* The tone of the school should explicitly and self-consciously stress values of unanxious expectation ("I won't threaten you but I expect much of you"), of trust (until abused), and of decency (the values of fairness, generosity, and tolerance). . . parents should be treated as essential collaborators.

"8. *Staff.* The principal and teachers should perceive themselves as generalists first (teachers and scholars in general education) and specialists second (experts in only one particular discipline). Staff should expect multiple obligations (teacher-counselor-manager) and feel a sense of commitment to the entire school.

"9. *Budget.* Ultimate administrative and budget targets should include, in addition to total student loads per teacher of eighty or fewer pupils, substantial time for collective planning by teachers, . . . the phased

reduction or elimination of some services now provided to students in many traditional comprehensive secondary schools."[36]

What are some of the more significant ideas which are emerging from ESM? Let me point out five.

First, there is the effort to reduce the number of subjects which students will take; 'Less is more' has become a driving force. Students, ESM claims, will do better if you cover fewer subjects. By going deeper into an area of interest, by insisting on the acquisition of serious understandings which emerge from the habit of learning on their own, students will begin to acquire the skill of pursuing learning on their own.

Second, there is much stress on the acquisition of good habits of mind. For example, the habits of perspective, analysis, imagination, empathy, communication, commitment, humility, and joy [37] are among the intellectual dispositions which good schools should foster in their students. The purpose of education is not simply in providing students with superficial images of the world acquired through the coverage of many topics, but rather in the enabling power which students acquire from consistently finding it necessary to draw on the habit of using knowledge.

Third is the recognition that the key worker in a school is the student. Here "working" means working with the mind. This means hard work, work which is often fatiguing and at the same time exciting. The way to achieve this sort of work is to recognize the tendency of students to respond when something in their context connects or seems likely to connect with something important. Very much in line with the purposefully oriented thinking which emerged from Dewey, ESM accepts

the claim that students will learn well when they are engaged with things that interest them. As Sizer points out, students will ". . . go along when they can see that such a journey will affect their own lives in some purposeful or intriguing way. The inherent interest of the matter is also influential. . . . the connection between what a student knows and what the new issue portends must be clear." [38]

Fourth, ESM recognizes that school people have a powerful penchant for persisting in viewing school learning in simplistic ways, ways which attempt to prepare students to 'display' their knowledge, the sort of activity that can be done with relative ease by a passive student. What we need to recognize is that this behavioristic view of learning, which has been largely in place for the past hundred years, is not adequate. Much more importantly is the need to shift from this hegemonized view of school learning to the functional view of learning comparable to that which was stressed by Dewey a century ago, one which expects the student to 'use' knowledge, to 'want' to use knowledge, to acquire the 'habit' of applying knowledge in a way which is designed to achieve the ends which the student is pursuing.

Fifth, the idea of organizing learning experiences, in a manner almost identical to that of Dewey in his Laboratory School, under the rubric of the 'enterprise,' or project, dominates the thinking of ESM. Projects can run for extended periods of time, sometimes for two or more years. The purpose of these projects is to give the student "the opportunity to shape a subject of your own choosing, to develop it over time, and to demonstrate to yourself and to us that you can persist in an important effort, that you can be self-conscious about your own work,

usefully and accurately critical of it, and that you can identify and learn from your own mistakes."[39]

To demonstrate the knowledges, skills and values one has acquired while pursuing such a project the student would maintain and use a portfolio. In this portfolio would be filed two and three-dimensional examples, print as well as electronic, of the activities, the succssess, the mistakes and failures, the false starts, the reconstructed forms of thinking, which the student experienced during the course of work on the project. The material in the portfolio would be use by the student to exhibit his work before faculty and significant others as a way of revealing the habits of mind which he claims to have acquired while pursuing the project.

Sizer and his associates recognize, of course, that tradition in our schools is a powerful, governing force. When it comes to substantial change of any sort in our schools many school people will opt to remain within the traditional pattern of schooling. In this case, that would entail a continued acceptance of a model of schooling which is based on technical rationality, on the notion that external authorities, policy-makers and test constructors, will, and ought to, continue to exert an inordinate amount of control over what transpires in the context of the school and classroom.

Nonetheless, ESM continues to represent a significant voice of resistance to the more technically rational, postivistically oriented, traditional design of schooling which we recognize under the rubric of the 'Effective Schools Movement."

Summary

Contrary to those who would argue that curricular change and development moves in cycles, swinging from one position to another much as a pendulum, the thrust of this paper has been to suggest that during the past century there has been, and continues to be, a significant dialectical tension at work beween the dominant, hegemonizing claims of the traditionalists, the Bagley/Demiaskevish 'essentialists', and the more liberal claims of the empirical-naturalistic, pragmatic, student/context-centered claims which continues to resist the domination of the traditionalist frame of reference. Because of the power of tradition to hold people within its sway, this dialectic is not likely to be resolved.

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